

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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[Back to News Home Page](#)

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## News Release

Egrets Submission:

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### **Just How Do We Connect Children with Nature??**

Director Dale Hall has given us our "Marching Orders"..... "Go forth and connect children with nature". What freedom that brings to the interpreters, educators, managers, biologists, ecologists, maintenance workers, equipment operators, administrators, and volunteers of the world! At least for the time being, we can throw all the goals, objectives, and lesson plans to the side.... and we can become children again as we think back to our long-forgotten memories of diggin' crawdads by the creek, rolling over logs and rocks in search of "rolly pollies", laying on our backs to identify animals in the cloud formations, or thinking of a good place to dig worms, so we could go fishing!

Our focus has not changed; it's just shifted a bit. So, the next time you have a group of scouts, preschoolers, or even middle-school-aged children on the refuge or around your home, just go "exploring". Marvel at a spider web.... Find out what made all the funny marks in the mud. It doesn't take a lot of education or training. It just takes that sense of wonder that we can so easily allow to wither if we don't keep it "watered." So grab your kids (or grandkids) and "water" your sense of wonder! Rachel Carson would be so proud of us!

Getting kids outside isn't just good for the environment. Yes, encouraging kids to connect with nature will build better environmental stewards.... But, there's a lot more to getting kids outside. "Outside" will build healthier, more-active kids who will live longer and healthier lives AND be good stewards for the things they've grown to love and cherish!

At the recent 2008 Outer Banks Health Expo, volunteers from Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges brought a little of the "outside" to the "inside"-- to encourage everyone to go "outside" for all kinds of reasons!



The "GET HEALTHY: GET OUTSIDE" crew from the Outer Banks Health Expo 2008! In keeping with the Director's initiative to "Connect Children with Nature", FWS staff and volunteers joined the Health Fair to encourage folks to "GET OUTSIDE"!!



OK, inside you can do fish printing.... no, go outside and go FISHING!!

Photo Credits: Abbey Reibel